Reporting New York Stories (Session 2)

Course Number: SS2: JOUR-UA 204.066

Day & Time: Mon/Wed, 10:00am-1:00pm

Location: 20 Cooper Sq.

Instructor: [Lambeth Hochwald](#)

Albert Class Number: 4951

You're crushing it at your high school news outlet. Now it's time to take the skills you've learned and apply them to a twice-weekly journalism course that gets you out of the classroom and onto the streets. You'll develop your journalistic voice and explore your passions as a writer as you report on off-the-beaten-path cityscapes.

We'll tap our OMNY subway fares to explore Jamaica Bay, the diverse neighborhoods along the 7 line and Staten Island for a behind-the-scenes tour of the minor league stadium and lunch made by Brooklyn grandmothers.

When we're not traversing the five boroughs, we'll keep polishing our reporting, interviewing and researching skills and meet journalists in the field, including a one-on-one with a front-page editor of the Wall Street Journal. We'll also tour the Food Network test kitchen and take a behind-the-scenes tour at 30 Rock.

To keep in the Big Apple spirit, we'll read short New York City-themed works by Colson Whitehead, Adam Gopnik, Mark Bittman, Jenny Zhang and others and discuss their unique approaches to writing about the city.

Ultimately, you'll finish the course with an even deeper understanding of how to cover the city that you can take back to your high school newsroom and, throughout the six-week immersion, you'll create a robust (and professional) Instagram portfolio and post several reported digital news and feature stories on your own website.

Course Description

No matter what medium you aspire to work in—digital, magazines, newspapers, TV, podcasts, radio or books—you need to know how to write clearly and concisely. That's what this class will teach you how to do. Good writing is grounded in logical thinking, solid research and comprehensive reporting.

In addition, the only way to learn journalism is by doing journalism. In the classroom you will do writing exercises, lots of writing exercises. Outside the classroom, as we explore some of the non-touristy parts of New York City, you will do some interesting man-on-the-street reporting. The goal is to give you as much research, reporting and writing training as we can pack into six weeks. You will learn how to produce journalism—tell stories—in a number of different forms: as hard news stories, as feature articles and as Instagram posts. By the end of the session you will be able to come up with a story idea and write/produce a news story on deadline. Bottom line: You will learn how to research and report which are essential elements of every story—news or feature—in every medium. And, you will have an adventure in the process. You will interview strangers, head out into the city and collaborate with your peers as we navigate the world of local journalism.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:
*Demonstrate awareness of journalism's core ethical values.
*Learn the structure, style and language of news writing, including building stories, from one-sentence leads to more complex articles, with an emphasis on structure, attribution and accuracy.
*Learn to write under deadline pressure.
Use databases and the web to gather information for idea generation as well as news and feature stories.
*Learn basic interviewing skills to gather information and quotes.
*Polish online writing techniques, including using social media.
*Use AP style and libel manual consistently.
*Meet working journalists (and interview real people!)

Requirements

*You will have at least one outside assignment every week.
*In-class assignments. We will be writing during every class-usually on deadline. Sometimes there will be an in-class exercise; other times you will be sent out during class.
*If you must miss class, please notify me by email or text before the class begins. We only meet once a week so more than one absence will affect your performance in class and therefore your grade.
*Deadlines are crucial to making it in journalism. Failure to meet your deadlines will result in deductions from your grade.

Assignments

All assignments are listed on the syllabus. If your assignment is late, even by an hour, you will be downgraded. You will be graded for research, reporting and writing as well as spelling and grammar. You'll also be responsible for writing a contact list for each story. You'll be setting up an Instagram account just for class and will be required to take a photo (and newsy caption) to accompany each assignment and post to Instagram. Finally, every story needs two headlines: One for print and the other designed for optimal SEO on the web.

Grading

By the end of six weeks you will have many graded assignments. Your final grade will reflect your scores on class and field assignments as well as class participation. **Effort and progress count**. Please note: A missed assignment is an automatic F. There are no makeup assignments. Attendance counts as does participation.

Here's how your grade will be calculated:
In-class assignments 25% / Out-of-class assignments 50% / Participation, positive attitude/collegiality and attendance 25%

Grading will conform to the Journalism Department's policy:

A=publishable as is; B=publishable with light editing; C=publishable with a rewrite only; D=major problems with facts, reporting and writing F=missing key facts, gross misspellings, plagiarism or libel

Checklist for your stories:
Make sure each piece contains a:
*Compelling lead (hard news or feature)
*Solid nut graf for feature-second graf that expands and amplifies for hard news
*Development of lede and main idea in logical order with transitions
*At least three source quotes
*Use of quotes and paraphrasing where warranted (sourcing and attribution required)
*Descriptive details, including images that show don't tell
*Correct grammar and usage, AP style
*Fair and balanced reporting/sourcing

Academic Integrity
Any plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration on assignments will result in a failure/could be grounds for failing the course. All quotes must be original and verifiable. You must be able to contact anyone you quote for further clarification or for me to verify accuracy of quotes. If you draw from someone else's work without properly crediting them, you will fail that assignment.

{WEEKLY SCHEDULE}

Week #1: Overview

Syllabus deep dive. Lecture on note-taking, defining terms (news judgment, leads; nut grafs; story structure). What is news? What does a basic news story look like? Inverted pyramid, structure of a news article, lead-writing. In class news writing assessment. Discussion of news stories, news outlets, how to find news. Interviewing techniques.
In class: Essay on the strengths and weaknesses you bring to class; Interview a classmate. First street interviews. Class Trip to Washington Square Park and Nolita

*Assignment: Classmate Q&A+Story #1: The (NYU) Summer Experience [600 WORDS]
Reading: Jenny Zhang*

Week #2: Building a Story

Lecture on context, structure, quote placement and paraphrasing. How to pitch a story (how are feature and news stories different). Class Trip to Roosevelt Island (and the 7 train)

Assignment: Story #2: Paying for Our Summer Commutes [600 WORDS] Reading: Colson Whitehead

Week #3: The Ins and Outs of Research & Fact-Checking

Lecture on why data matters more today than ever and how to use dry data to create a compelling story. Plus, the important work of fact-checkers. Intro to the final feature. Pitching sessions 1 and 2. Class Trip to Jamaica Bay/Rockaway Beach

Assignment: Story #3: Summer in the City (and the vendors who make it work) [600 WORDS] Reading: Adam Gopnik

Week #4: NYC is a foodie town—let's cover it!

Lecture on what you need to know if you want to write about food, restaurants and trends. How to forecast future trends in this beat and others. Feature writing styles (part I-- profiles, Q&As, long-form stories).

Class Trip to the Lower East Side (Yonah Shimmel Knishes, Russ & Daughters and Economy Candy)

Assignment: Story #4: *Quintessential NYC Foods [600 WORDS] Reading: Mark Bittman*

Week #5: Feature writing techniques

Final lecture on feature writing styles (part II -- profiles, Q&As, long-form stories). Finding the "second day" story. Final Feature workshop

Class Trip to Staten Island and Lunch with the Nonnas

Assignment: Work on Final Feature

Week #6: Review and Presentations

Reporting Shares/Instagram brags!

DUE: Final Feature (750 words)/Final Exam